



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Special Enrollment Period for Individuals Eligible for or Enrolled in COBRA Coverage

Individuals currently covered by COBRA may enroll in a Federal Marketplace plan through July 1, 2014.

Indianapolis – The Indiana Department of Insurance is alerting individuals currently purchasing health insurance through the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) they may qualify for a special enrollment period allowing them to enroll in an individual health insurance plan instead. Individuals so choosing must enroll in a new plan by **July 1, 2014**.

Individuals who choose to replace their COBRA coverage with a private health plan through the Federal Marketplace may lower their premium and qualify for tax credits that can lower their monthly premiums. To enroll in a Marketplace plan during this one-time special enrollment period, contact the Marketplace Call Center at 1-800-318-2596 or 1-855-889-4325. Individuals should then explain that they are calling about COBRA benefits and the Marketplace. Once approved for the special enrollment period, they can then apply for and enroll in a Marketplace plan either online or by phone.

If individuals need help in signing up through the Marketplace, Indiana Navigators are available throughout the state to assist. Indiana Navigators are certified to help Hoosier insurance consumers complete applications for health coverage under the Marketplace or state-based insurance affordability programs, such as Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program or the Healthy Indiana Plan. Indiana Navigators are certified by the Indiana Department of Insurance. To find an Indiana Navigator in your area, go to <http://www.in.gov/healthcarereform/2468.htm>.

"Those seeking coverage in a Federal Marketplace health plan could qualify for premium tax credits and lower out-of-pocket costs, depending on their household size and income," said Insurance Commissioner Stephen W. Robertson. "However, consumers also may want to consider other plans to determine the overall best option for them."

To explore plans not in the Marketplace, which typically have broader networks and more available doctors and hospitals, Hoosiers can contact a health plan directly or work with a health insurance agent. Agents – also called producers – are licensed by the Indiana Department of Insurance. To find one, go to <http://www.in.gov/doi/2611.htm>.

The next open enrollment period is Nov. 15, 2014-Feb. 15, 2015 for 2015 coverage. Individuals currently covered by COBRA who miss the July 1 deadline for the one-time special enrollment period will have to wait to enroll in a new Marketplace plan during the 2015 open enrollment period, or they can enroll when their COBRA coverage expires. However, if they choose to end their COBRA coverage early outside of the open enrollment period and after the July 1 deadline, they will not be able to enroll in a Marketplace plan until open enrollment begins on Nov. 15.

It is important to note also that those who plan to replace COBRA coverage with a new health plan should not let their COBRA coverage end before their plan starts, to avoid a gap in their coverage.

COBRA gives individuals the right to choose to keep their job-based health coverage for a period of time, usually up to 18 months. However, the previous employer no longer pays any of the insurance costs and the entire monthly premium is paid by the individual seeking coverage.

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The Indiana Department of Insurance (IDOI) protects Indiana's insurance consumers by monitoring and regulating the financial strengths and market conduct activities of insurance companies and agents. The IDOI monitors insurance companies and agents for compliance with state laws to protect consumers and to offer them the best array of insurance products available. The IDOI also assists Hoosiers with insurance questions and provides guidance in understanding how insurance policies work.

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